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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [PREF](#) [TU](#) [TIP](#) [IN](#) [TURKEY](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S 157 TIP HELPLINE: IT SAVES LIVES

REF: A. ANKARA 4276

[B](#). ANKARA 4316

[1](#). Summary: The USG's financing of a trafficking prevention campaign, put into effect by the International Office for Migration (IOM) working closely with the GOT, has demonstrated outstanding results from reclaimed lives to governmental cooperation. Twenty-four victims of trafficking have been rescued as a direct result of the 157 Helpline. With stories now surfacing of the torture and rape of foreign and (now) Turkish women forced into prostitution, continuing the helpline is crucial. End Summary.

MONEY WELL SPENT

[2](#). Allan Freedman, Strategic Consultant for IOM Ankara, reported that the Turkish counter-trafficking campaign launched in May 2005 is an enormous success, and, in fact, is the most successful campaign IOM has managed in the world. The campaign is funded by a \$600,000 grant from the USG to IOM and the campaign has validated that the basic strategic framework and implementation of the 157 Helpline does work and that a multi-national, multi-media campaign can be successful with a coordinated effort.

[3](#). Since May 23 the helpline has received 236 trafficking-related calls. One hundred and thirty of those calls were rescue requests (from victims themselves as well as from clients, friends or concerned citizens). Twenty-four women have been rescued from modern slavery: 11 Ukrainians, ten Moldovans, two Turks and one Romanian. Six women have been rescued in Antalya, five in Mersin, five in Istanbul, three in Ankara, two each in Kusadasi and Elazig and one in Sanliurfa. Twelve suspected victims of trafficking have refused assistance and today the status of four is being determined. The figures steadily rise.

[4](#). In addition to saving lives, the trafficking prevention campaign has instilled goodwill in many GOT bureaus, says Marielle Sander-Lindstrom, IOM's Chief of Mission. Now not only does the Foreigner's Department of the National Police deal with the issue, but the Public Order and Organized Crime Departments have joined in the fight by providing training to police emergency operators on how to recognize human trafficking victims. The Ankara Bar Association has also trained 157 Operators on the rights of foreign women married to Turks.

[5](#). When PolOff asked Anastacia, one of the 157 operators, how she handles the disturbing stories recounted to her day after day, she replied that one life saved is well worth everything she endures.

OUT OF THE HORROR

[6](#). Sander-Lindstrom related the unsettling story of a 32-year-old Moldovan mother of three who came to Istanbul on the promise of a job in the tourism sector, sadly a very typical scenario. The Moldovan found herself locked in a basement for six years forced to work as a sex slave serving dark-skinned men who spoke Turkish with heavy foreign accents. (Note: Sander-Lindstrom strongly feels that the men were of Arabic origin and not Kurdish.) The Moldovan was given hormonal injections (what she called "serum") making her gain 20 kilos, which, she said, "made her more appealing to the men."

[7](#). Five Ukrainians in Antalya were trapped in an underground hell hole, the entrance camouflaged with stones. The women were tortured into prostitution by beatings and one woman had hot oil poured on her legs and genitals. One of the victims called the helpline after she saw the number advertised on television. Newspapers reported that the women were kept in an underground four square metered shelter with no bathing facilities and no circulation other than one fan. The victims had been in the subterranean torture chamber for ten months, having arrived in Antalya with (once again) the promise of employment. Two of the Ukrainians are mother and daughter, both raped and tortured by their captors.

18. One of the other five Ukrainian victims was forced to marry her trafficker to allow her also-trafficked sister to return to the Ukraine. What she did not know was that the trafficker, now her husband, had blackmailed her sister into recruiting girls for him in the Ukraine, threatening to hurt the married sister if she did not comply. The traffickers were arrested and the woman and her fellow victims rescued after the gendarmerie set up an undercover sting operation at a restaurant where they randevued with clients.

19. Two Ukrainians and three Moldovans were rescued in Mersin the previous week. Luckily one of the victims had seen a poster advertising the 157 Helpline in Trabzon (her point of entry) and convinced a client to help her call for help. (Note: PolOffs had taken the posters to Trabzon (see reftels) and asked law enforcement and the public prosecutor to tack up the posters at all points of entry and other appropriate venues.) The women were rescued by Turkish gendarmerie and are currently sheltered in Istanbul awaiting repatriation.

110. The myth that trafficking of women in Turkey only involves foreign women was debunked with the rescue of two Turks in Elazig. Unfortunately, both refused to press charges against their traffickers or be interviewed by IOM. They have since disappeared.

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

11. Summary: Both Freedman and Sander-Lindstrom caution that the number of victims is bound to skyrocket as more victims are made aware of the 157 Helpline. As each tragedy and atrocity is uncovered by the 157 Helpline, the absolute necessity to maintain its funding and support grows ever more clear. End Summary.
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